

REMARKS

Claims 1-33 are pending in the present application. Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter with respect to claims 3, 6-14 and 16-33. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Shiiya (US 2003/0131717 A1). Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiiya in view of Furukawa (US 2003/0177890 A1). The Examiner rejected claim 15 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiiya in view of Fujiwara et al. (US 2003/0172798 A1). Applicants note that the Examiner's Office Action refers to "Furukawa et al." for the rejection of claim 15. It is believed that, in view of the cited publication number, the rejection is based on "Fujiwara et al."

Applicants note that the present application claims priority to four Japanese applications filed either on August 22, 2002 or October 30, 2002. These filing dates precede the U.S. filing dates of Shiiya (January 14, 2003), Furukawa '890 (March 11, 2003) and Fujiwara et al. '798 (March 7, 2003). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections. See MPEP 2136.03(I). Pursuant to 37 CFR 1.55, Applicants submit herewith an English translation of the Japanese applications with the requisite statements.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.


If, for any reason, the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, Applicants request that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles telephone number (213) 892-5630 to discuss any steps necessary to place the application in condition for allowance.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicants petition for any

required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing Docket No. 393032040000.

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Respectfully submitted,

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